

Board members,

As native Californians living in Sonoma County, my wife and I wish to support strict (and tiered if necessary) water quality standards for protecting the safety of citizens and property in our state.

Population increases in Sonoma County, and other once rural state locations, mandate that standards for individual and agricultural septic systems be at a high level. Additionally, monitoring of waste disposal systems near water bodies is essential to insure that local and downstream property owners are not endangered from high levels of bacteria and nitrates.

The proximity and numbers of once isolated populations in California require health standard upgrades, as your public interest body is considering. Obsolete and ineffective septic systems are putting all of us at risk. Of course it will cost those with substandard systems to bring their treatment systems into the 21st century. This cost should not be subject to public pressure from individual or agricultural interests. We cannot look the other way, delay, or ignore health and quality of life issues from regional air and water pollution issues. Pollution from individual sources, collectively, must be publicly regulated, not voluntary, not riddled with exceptions, and not determined by the loudest voices. Those properties with the potential to affect water bodies, either through groundwater or runoff must be first in line for upgrades and closely monitored. Often, these are the loudest voices with objections.

Thank you for representing the public in this overdue review of water quality standards in our county and state.

Warren and Janis Watkins  
Healdsburg, CA.